

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 428

EA 027 665

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 TITLE Holding Schools Accountable: Performance-Based Reform in Education.
 INSTITUTION Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.
 REPORT NO ISBN-0-8175-5103-6
 PUB DATE 96
 NOTE 382p.
 AVAILABLE FROM Brookings Institution Press, 1775 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-2188 (paperback: ISBN-0-8175-5103-6, \$19.95; hardback: ISBN-0-8157-5104-4, \$42.95); E-mail: BIBOOKS@brook.edu
 PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
 EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
 DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Educational Economics; *Educational Finance; Educational Vouchers; Elementary Secondary Education; Incentives; *Outcomes of Education; *Performance; Private Schools; Public Schools; *School Choice; School Restructuring

ABSTRACT

Many people believe that future reforms of education should focus on the primary mission of elementary and secondary schools and that these schools must be held more accountable for the academic performance of their students. This book brings together researchers from various disciplines--most notably economics, educational policy and management, and political science--to examine such efforts throughout the country. The authors address a range of issues related to performance-based reform and analyze two commonly proposed approaches--the incorporation of accountability and incentive programs into the existing school system, and school choice. Following the introduction by Helen F. Ladd, three chapters in part 1 examine performance-based incentive programs: (2) "Recognizing and Rewarding Success in Public Schools" (Charles T. Clotfeller and Helen F. Ladd); (3) "The New Accountability in State Education Reform: From Process to Performance" (Richard F. Elmore, Charles H. Abelman, and Susan H. Fuhrman); (4) "Standards-Based School Reform: Policy, Practice, and Performance" (David K. Cohen). Comments on the chapters are offered by Eric A. Hanushek and Robert H. Meyer. Part 2, "Choice and Performance," contains the following: (5) "School Choice and Student Performance" (John F. Witte); and (6) "The Effects of Private School Vouchers on Schools and Students" (Caroline Minter Hoxby). Thomas J. Kane provided comments on chapters 5 and 6. The third part examines the allocation of funds in one chapter: (7) "The Allocation of Resources to Special Education and Regular Instruction" (Hamilton Lankford and James Wyckoff). Comments are provided by Jane Hannaway. Chapters in part 4 examine the costs of achieving high performance: (8) "How and Why Money Matters: An Analysis of Alabama Schools" (Ronald F. Ferguson and Helen F. Ladd); (9) "Economics of School Reform: Three Promising Models" (W. Steven Barnett); and (10) "Alternative Approaches to Measuring the Cost of Education" (William Duncombe, John Ruggiero, and John Yinger). William H. Clune and Richard J. Murnane provide comments. References accompany each chapter. A total of 37 tables, 4 figures, and an index are included. (LMI)